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FEDERAL REGISTER announcing the receipt of the petition and describing the decisions alleged to be inconsistent. Public comment on the petition will be permitted for a period of fifteen (15) days after publication. Public comment regarding the proper disposition of the petition shall be limited to that submitted in writing, either with the petition or in response to the FEDERAL REGISTER solicitation of public comment.

(d) *Determination of petition; distribution and publication.* Within fifteen (15) days after the close of the period for public comment referred to in paragraph (c) of this section, the Customs Service will issue a decision to the petitioner addressing the inconsistency complained of. That decision will either conform the inconsistent decisions to the current views of the Customs Service as to the proper tariff classification or other disposition of the subject of those decisions or explain why no inconsistency exists. Copies of the decisions to the petitioner will be transmitted directly to all ports (or other Customs offices) identified in the petition and will be distributed through the Customs Information Exchange or by other means to such other ports or offices as may be necessary to correct any inconsistency identified. A summary of the decision will also be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and the weekly Customs Bulletin.

(e) *Effective date.* Unless otherwise specified in the decision, a decision issued in response to a petition filed under this section will be effective immediately and, where applicable, applied to all entries for which liquidation is not final.

(f) *Effect on other procedures.* The filing of a petition under this procedure shall not preclude the petitioner or any other person entitled to do so from filing a protest or a domestic interested party petition regarding the same matter under the procedures set forth in sections 514, 515 and 516 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended and parts 174 and 175 of this chapter, provided the applicable requirements set forth therein are complied with. However, the decision issued in response to the petition may serve as the basis for the disposition of any protest so filed, or as

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an information letter setting forth the position of the Customs Service pursuant to subpart A of part 175 of this chapter. The decision issued in response to a petition filed under this section is not itself a decision subject to protest under sections 514-515 of the Tariff Act and part 174 of this chapter.

[T.D. 89-74, 54 FR 31517, July 31, 1989]

Subpart B—Government Procurement; Country-of-Origin Determinations

AUTHORITY: R.S. 251, as amended (19 U.S.C. 66), sec. 624, 46 Stat. 759 (19 U.S.C. 1624); Pub. L. 96-39, 93 Stat. 144.

SOURCE: T.D. 83-13, 48 FR 1189, Jan. 11, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

§ 177.21 Applicability.

This subpart applies to the issuance of country-of-origin advisory rulings and final determinations relating to Government procurement under Title III, "Trade Agreements Act of 1979," Pub. L. 96-39, 93 Stat. 144, for the purpose of granting waivers of certain "Buy American" restrictions in U.S. law or practice for products for eligible countries. This subpart is intended to be applied consistent with the Federal Procurement Regulations (41 CFR part 1-6) and the Defense Acquisition Regulation (32 CFR section VI).

§ 177.22 Definitions.

(a) *Country of origin.* For the purpose of this subpart, an article is a product of a country or instrumentality only if (1) it is wholly the growth, product, or manufacture of that country or instrumentality, or (2) in the case of an article which consists in whole or in part of materials from another country or instrumentality, it has been substantially transformed into a new and different article of commerce with a name, character, or use distinct from that of the article or articles from which it was so transformed. The term "instrumentality" shall not be construed to include any agency or division of the government of a country, but may be construed to include such arrangements as the European Economic Community.

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(b) *Advisory ruling.* An advisory ruling is a non-binding, non-reviewable written statement issued by the Director, Commercial Rulings Division, Headquarters, U.S. Customs Service, which does no more than call attention to a well established interpretation or principal of law relating to the country of origin, without applying it to a particular set of facts. Customs will issue an advisory ruling in response to a request for a final determination if:

(1) The request suggests that general information, rather than a final determination, is actually being sought,

(2) The request is incomplete or otherwise fails to meet the requirements set forth in § 177.25(a), or

(3) The ruling requested cannot be issued for any other reason, and Customs believes that the general information supplied by an advisory ruling may be of some benefit to the party making the request. An advisory ruling is not a ruling issued prior to importation under 28 U.S.C. 1581(h).

(c) *Final determination.* A final determination is a binding judicially reviewable statement issued by the Assistant Commissioner, Office of Regulations and Rulings, Headquarters, U.S. Customs Service, in response to a written request submitted under the provisions of this subpart that interprets and applies the provisions of law and regulation relating to the country of origin to a specific set of facts. A final determination may be issued to a party-at-interest prior to actual entry of the merchandise.

(d) *Party-at-interest.* For purposes of this subpart the term party-at-interest means:

(1) A foreign manufacturer, producer, or exporter, or a United States importer of merchandise which is the subject of a final determination under this subpart,

(2) A manufacturer, producer, or wholesaler in the United States of a like product,

(3) United States members of a labor organization or other association of workers whose members are employed in the manufacture, production, or wholesale in the United States of a like product, and

(4) A trade or business association a majority of whose members manufac-

ture, produce, or wholesale a like product in the United States.

[T.D. 83-13, 48 FR 1189, Jan. 11, 1983, as amended by T.D. 91-77, 56 FR 46115, Sept. 10, 1991]

§ 177.23 Who may request a country-of-origin advisory ruling or final determination.

A country-of-origin advisory ruling or final determination may be requested by:

(a) A foreign manufacturer, producer, or exporter, or a United States importer of merchandise,

(b) A manufacturer, producer, or wholesaler in the United States of a like product,

(c) United States members of a labor organization or other association of workers whose members are employed in the manufacture, production, or wholesale in the United States of a like product, or

(d) A trade or business association a majority of whose members manufacture, produce, or wholesale a like product in the United States.

§ 177.24 By whom request is filed.

A request may be filed by an individual or organization listed in § 177.23 or by a duly authorized attorney or agent on behalf of the individual or organization. A request filed by a corporation shall be signed by a corporate officer, and a request filed by a partnership shall be signed by a partner.

§ 177.25 Form and content of request.

(a) A request for an advisory ruling shall be in writing and shall contain such information as will enable Customs to provide the requester with the applicable principle of law or well established interpretation relating to the particular country of origin.

(b) A request for a final determination shall be in writing and shall contain the following information:

(1) The name of the requester, the requester's principal place of business, and a statement that the requester is authorized to file the request under the provisions of § 177.24;

(2) A description of the existing article for which a country-of-origin determination is requested;